



March 12, 2015

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
County Executive
101 Monroe St.
Rockville, MD 20850

The Honorable George Leventhal
President, Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Ave, 5th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Messrs. Leggett and Leventhal:

The Water Quality Advisory Group (WQAG) has been actively following the proposed legislation on nonessential pesticide applications as presented in bill number 52-14, and we see a need to better understand the impacts of pesticides on the County's water resources in order to better inform decision-making associated with this bill.

The WQAG has heard from proponents of bill 52-14 and has engaged in discussions about the bill's impact to our citizens and environment. Much of the debate to date surrounding this issue has focused on potential impacts to human health; however very little information has been presented on the impacts to water quality. The WQAG is unclear on the effect pesticide application has on water quality, including impacts to human health and impacts to aquatic organisms and aquatic ecosystems. In particular, the WQAG is interested in understanding the potential impact on human and animal health of legacy pesticides that have been banned versus the synthetic and organic pesticides that are currently in use, and whether pesticides are present in the County's groundwater, stormwater and drinking water.

As debate continues on this complex issue, we recommend that existing data and information be considered, and that experts who can speak to the science associated with the impact of pesticides on water quality and aquatic ecosystems are included in the Council's evaluation process. By including the relevant scientific data and experts in the discussion, the residents of Montgomery County will be assured the Council has taken appropriate steps to address all possible concerns.

The following are links to some reports on monitoring data and potential risks that may be of use in evaluating the proposed County ban on nonessential pesticide application on lawns.

WATER QUALITY ADVISORY GROUP

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USGS Pesticides Monitoring Reports (ground and surface water):

<http://md.water.usgs.gov/publications/wrir-97-4139/html.htm>

http://md.water.usgs.gov/publications/wrir-97-4280/wrir_97_4280_html.html

Maryland Reconnaissance Survey of Pesticides in Surface Water (downloadable report):

<https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/reconnaissance-survey-of-nonpoint-source-pesticides-in-maryland-surface-waters>

Environment and Human Health, Inc. (non-profit organization based in Connecticut) Summary of Report on Risk from Lawn Care Pesticides (link to download entire report is on the right side of the webpage):

<http://www.ehhi.org/reports/lcpesticides/summary.shtml>

The WQAG appreciates the efforts underway to make a transparent, science-based decision on this issue.

Sincerely,



Beth Forbes
Co-Chair



Paul Hlavinka
Co-Chair

The Water Quality Advisory Group (WQAG) is directed to engage in issues that have an impact on water quality in the County and to provide advice or feedback to the County Executive and the County Council.